

From: Honors College Advisory Committee (Professors Jesse Curran, Lingxiang Li, Renee Markowicz, Runi Mukherji, Fernando Nieto, Carol Quirke, Shebuti Rayana, Frank Sanacory, and Barb Hillery, Associate Provost)

To: Dorothy Escribano, Provost and Academic Vice President

Date: February 26, 2024

Re: Update on for Honors College

Please find attached the Honors College Advisory Committee's suggestions for maintaining SUNY Old Westbury's Honors College for 2024-2025 while we finalize planning for 2025-2026 and onwards. They are based on multiple meetings, research of other Honors College programs, and they align with SUNY Old Westbury's unique history and mission. Prior to the pandemic the Honors College was a vital part of Old Westbury's curricular and co-curricular activities. Students found the College's mentoring essential to their moves forward to graduate programs, professional programs, and careers. Ultimately the committee hopes to design a program with the critical mentoring and academic rigor and innovation that will add to Old Westbury's profile in recruiting students and advancing excellence at the university. This requires a year of planning on our part.

We look forward to hearing back from you of college leadership's assessment of these recommendations for funding for the coming year, and as significantly, interest in moving forward with them. We believe it would be helpful to meet with Brian Terry and Frank Pizzardi to develop a shared sense of enrollment priorities for Honors College students for 2024-2025. We also believe that the program will require continued staffing to continue to serve the Honors College students currently enrolled in the program.

We have not answered all of the elements of our charge, but believe we need dialogue with and commitment from Academic Affairs to move forward on specific charges, including, for example, developing the Honors College's mission, vision, and learning outcomes, and finalizing the curricula's alignment with SUNY Old Westbury's Liberal Education program.

Thank you, Carol

History and Activity: The Honors College Advisory Committee was reconstituted in the fall of 2023 from faculty who had been long-term members of the Committee and new members from the Spring of 2023. The committee has met five times in Fall 2023.

The committee determined its charge, unanimously agreed upon on October 26, 2023.

Honors College Advisory Committee Charge: Old Westbury's Honor's College Advisory Committee, reconstituted in Spring 2023, will, beginning in Fall 2023, to advise the Provost's Office on redesigning Old Westbury's Honors College. The committee will:

- review models recommended by the Provost's office, and additional models that appear innovative to articulate ideas and tailor an Honors College program consistent with Old Westbury's mission.
- make recommendations for the curricula, including potential courses, consideration of alignment with Liberal Education requirements, and requirements for capstone or research projects.
- determine faculty oversight of an Honors College—our Honors College was not under the oversight of CAP—should it be?
- explore how to build faculty engagement with the program.
- consider options for admissions, eligibility for enrollment into the program, and guidelines for retention within the program.
- explore ideas for building community among Honors College students via designated space, co-curricular activities, student-led activities, etc.
- develop a Mission and Vision statement, along with Learning Outcomes for program-level assessment (curricular/co-curricular).

To begin, committee members researched the contours of model programs provided by the Provost's Office: SUNY Geneseo, Fredonia, and New Paltz, and Randolph Macon College, the University of Washington and CUNY's Macauley Honor's College. We sought information on program size, staffing (where possible), curricula, including applied learning and thesis requirements, co-curricular program, dedicated space, dedicated advising, enrollment requirements, such as GPA, and program benefits, such as scholarships, funding for research or study abroad, or laptops. (See Model Programs Summary).

In addition, the committee:

- examined SUNY's compilation of programs "Honors Programs, Information Summary, 2022," and multiple articles in the National Collegiate Honors Council's (NCHC) Monograph Series about the history and hallmarks of successful Honors programs.
- reviewed the NCHC's "Shared Principles and Practices of Honors Education."
- learned more about Vertically Integrated Projects (VIPS) operating at multiple SUNY research campuses, and an increasing number of campuses nationwide, which provide a multi-year, project-based, high-touch learning experience for students.

For guidance the committee chair also met with the Associate Provost, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the current Honors College Faculty Mentor, and its former Director.

Recommendations for 2024-2025: The Honors College Advisory Committee makes the following recommendations for programming and budget for the F24-S25 school year. We await further guidance on the College's commitment to the program before refining our suggestions

and developing a mission statement, vision statement, and learning objectives for the Honors College, and long-term plan for the following years.

- Immediately resume the cohort model that Old Westbury has utilized to include a Freshman Year cohort for Fall 2024 of 40 students. Cohorts enhance students' connection with the Honors College and the university and are the most common form within the models we examined. Limiting class size for a small number of HC courses each semester sustains these advantages. We could continue a mixed-enrollment model, with the assumption that the majority of students in any HC class would be HC students if courses were capped at a lower number. Smaller class size is typical of nearly every HC program we examined. Costs for this would include support for curricular and co-curricular activities for the year, and potentially increased faculty staffing.
- Expand curricular and co-curricular activities by providing faculty teaching Honors College courses funding to a) bring in speakers; b) take field trips; c) continue cohort-building activities including orientation for FY students and end-of-semester gathering; d) maintaining dedicated Honors College lounge. Events could be made available to the university community to maximize impact.
- Join the Honors Council, resuming membership in the Northeast Regional Honors Council, and joining the National Collegiate Honors Council. Cost of participation is minimal, and consistent participation in the regional or national organization would ensure our program aligns with best practices in other Honors Colleges. Send associated faculty and/or students to regional and national conferences, which is particularly vital as we revive our program.
- Ensure continued university acknowledgement of student involvement in the Honors College in their transcript; this would include Banner system recording of all HC classes, and DegreeWorks analysis of student work. Also continue to provide Honors College sashes and pins for graduation.
- Provide seed grants for three faculty—in math or science, arts and humanities, and social sciences to develop and then teach a VIP course model, or Course-embedded Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE) or interdisciplinary course to commence in 2025-2026. We believe Academic Affairs should facilitate coordinating the Steam Fellows working on High Impact Course Design with the Honors College to maximize resource efficiency.
- Provide \$1,000 non-tuition scholarships to 40 incoming students. Local Honors Colleges such as Farmingdale provide this sum to students, CUNY provides students a full academic scholarship for four years, and additional funding for research.
- Convert \$500 book scholarships for current students to non-tuition scholarships.
- Provide two course releases per semester minimally, to the current HC faculty mentor to ensure strong co-curricular offerings, continuity of curricula, and critical mentoring and

advising support. This two-course release is a temporary recommendation while we develop our final recommendations for 2025-2026.

- The Honors College also requires administrative and advising support that has been lost since the pandemic and more recently. This support cannot be accomplished by the program's current Faculty Mentor alone, hence we recommend an immediate hire for a new administrative staff who can play both roles in support of the Honors College in this interim period.

Budget for 2024-2025:

Description	Cost
Curricular and Co-Curricular program budget/support for HC Lounge (External speakers, trips, activities)	\$20,000
Membership Northeast Regional Honors Council	\$ 200
Membership National Collegiate Honors Council	\$ 750
Attendance at Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference for four	\$ 4,000
Attendance at National Collegiate Honors Council for two	\$ 4,000
HC student graduation honors recognition	\$ 1,630
Seed Grants: \$2,000/faculty member, for five faculty—in different liberal education categories, for example, one in the math or sciences, one in the Arts or Humanities, and one in the Social Sciences at a minimum	\$ 10,000
Convert current book scholarships to non-tuition scholarships*	
Staffing (Faculty Mentor, Instructional Support Assistant)*	
Student non-tuition scholarships—approximately 40 students at \$1000/year	\$ 40,000
TOTAL	\$ 80,580*

Currently funding to attract students comes from Enrollment Services. Funding for staffing and book conversion data budget information is unavailable to us, but should be available to you.